BATMAN
THE NEW ADVENTURES
414
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BY STARLIN, APARO & DECARLO
MILLENNIUM
IS COMING

SHE WAS JUST ANOTHER NAMELESS VICTIM, MURDERED FOR REASONS YET TO BE FATHOMED.
IT WAS ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO, IN A BACK ALLEY OF A CRUMMY SECTION OF GOTHAM CALLED SOUTH HEIGHTS. I'D HEARD THE CALL OVER THE CAR RADIO AND DECIDED TO STOP BY FOR A LOOK, WONDERING IF THIS KILLING WAS CONNECTED TO TWO EARLIER SLASHER MURDERS.
EXACT SAME M.O. -- MUTILATED, LEFT IN THE DUMPSTER.
ANY IDEA WHO SHE IS?
NOPE, JUST ANOTHER JANE DOE IN HER EARLY TWENTIES, BUTCHERED AND DISPOSED OF LIKE A SACK OF GARBAGE.
THIS KIND OF CRIME HAPPENS A LOT MORE OFTEN THAN ANYONE WOULD LIKE TO ADMIT.
I'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH HUNDREDS OF CASES LIKE IT, MAYBE NOT AS BRUTAL, BUT JUST AS ANONYMOUS.
G-3275
VICTIMS!

BATMAN 414 (USPS 046-340). Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. Second class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics,Inc., Subscription Dept., P.O. Box 1981, New York, NY 10185. Annual subscription rate $9.00. Outside U.S.A. $11.00 in U.S. funds. Copyright © 1987 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives,Inc., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York , NY 10017. (212) 391-1400. Printed in U.S.A.
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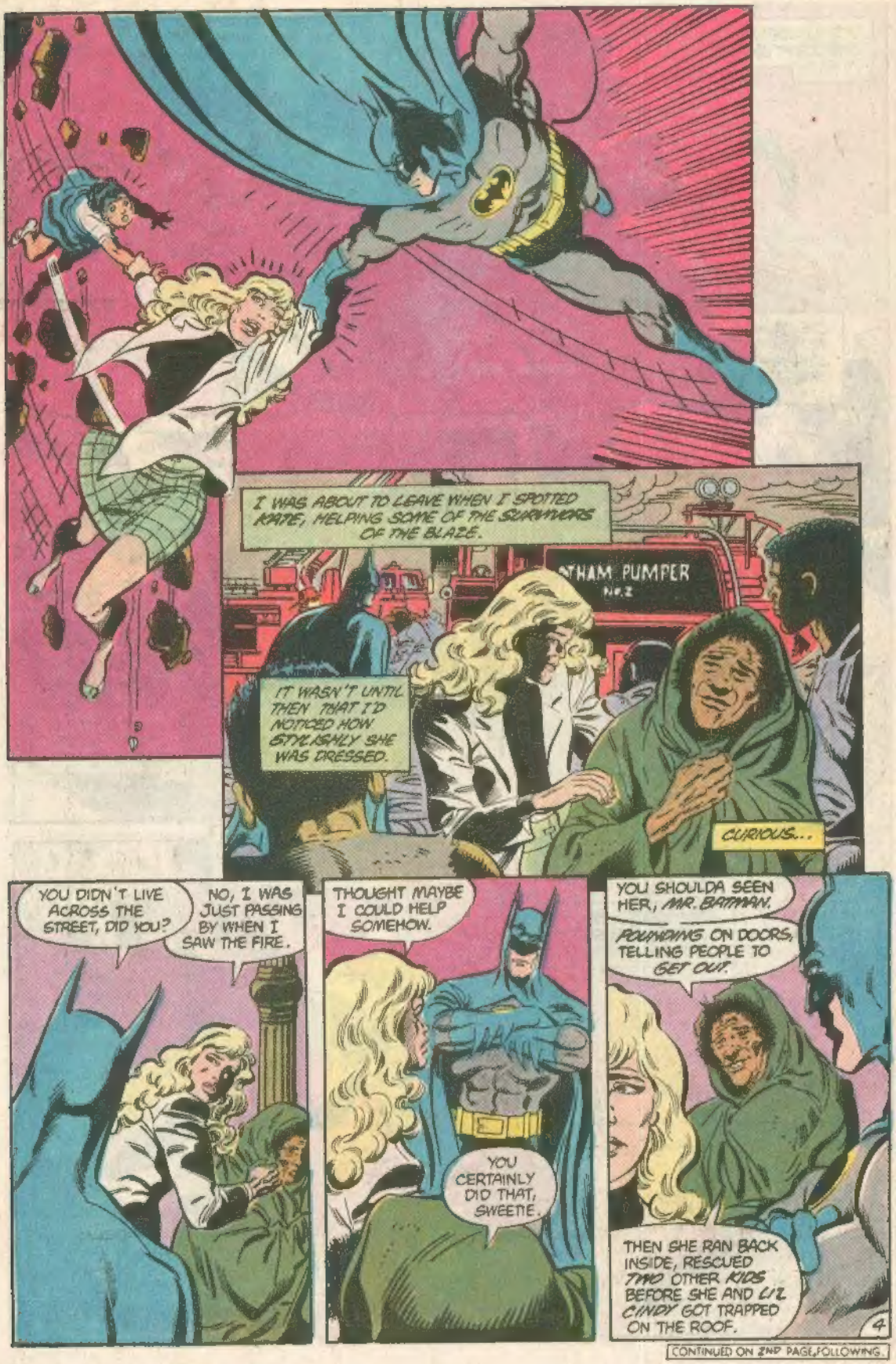
I STILL CAN'T UNDERSTAND THIS TYPE OF CRIME.
THE MADMAN CUT HER TO RIBBONS AFTER HE WAS DONE WITH HER.
SO SENSELESS...
I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS WORK.
SURE, NOT THAT I THINK THEY'LL FIND ANYTHING.
THIS CRAZY DOESN'T LEAVE ANY USEFUL EVIDENCE BEHIND.
HE'S A NON-SECRETOR... CAN'T EVEN GET A BLOOD TYPE ON HIM.
I'D LIKE TO SEE THE FORENSIC REPORT WHEN YOUR LAB BOYS ARE DONE.
HE'LL SLIP UP SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, JIM.
THEN WE'LL HAVE HIM.
DO YOU SMELL SOMETHING BURNING?
BETTER GET ON THE RADIO TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT!
LOOK'S LIKE SOMETHING BIG'S BURNING OVER ON DECKER AVE.
I'M GOING ON AHEAD, TO SEE IF ANYONE NEEDS HELP.
IF I'D COME ALONG EVEN A FEW SECONDS LATER, KATE WOULD HAVE DIED IN THAT FIRE.
SHE WAS IN THAT TIGHT OF A FIX.
2

I'D NEVER MET KATE BABCOCK BEFORE THAT NIGHT.
ALL I KNEW THEN WAS THAT I HAD MERE SECONDS TO SAVE HER AND THE CHILD.
OF COURSE AT THAT MOMENT, I HAD NO IDEA THE IMPACT SHE'D HAVE ON MY LIFE.
TO ME SHE WAS JUST ANOTHER STRANGER, IN NEED OF RESCUE.
I NEARLY DIDN'T MAKE IT.
FORTUNATELY, KATE HAD MORE GUTS THAN MOST.
STRANGERS ARE ALWAYS THE EASIEST TO DEAL WITH.
SHE MUST HAVE FELT CERTAIN THAT SHE WAS FALLING TO HER OWN DEATH.
YET SHE KEPT A TIGHT GRIP ON THAT LITTLE GIRL JUST THE SAME.
3


I WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE WHEN I SPOTTED KATE, HELPING SOME OF THE SURVIVORS OF THE BLAZE.
IT WASN'T UNTIL THEN THAT I'D NOTICED HOW STYLISHLY SHE WAS DRESSED.
CURIOUS...
YOU DIDN'T LIVE ACROSS THE STREET, DID YOU?
NO, I WAS JUST PASSING BY WHEN I SAW THE FIRE.
THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD HELP SOMEHOW.
YOU CERTAINLY DID THAT, SWEETIE.
YOU SHOULDA SEEN HER, MR. BATMAN.
POUNDING ON DOORS, TELLING PEOPLE TO GET OUT.
THEN SHE RAN BACK INSIDE, RESCUED TWO OTHER KIDS BEFORE SHE AND LIL CINDY GOT TRAPPED ON THE ROOF.
4
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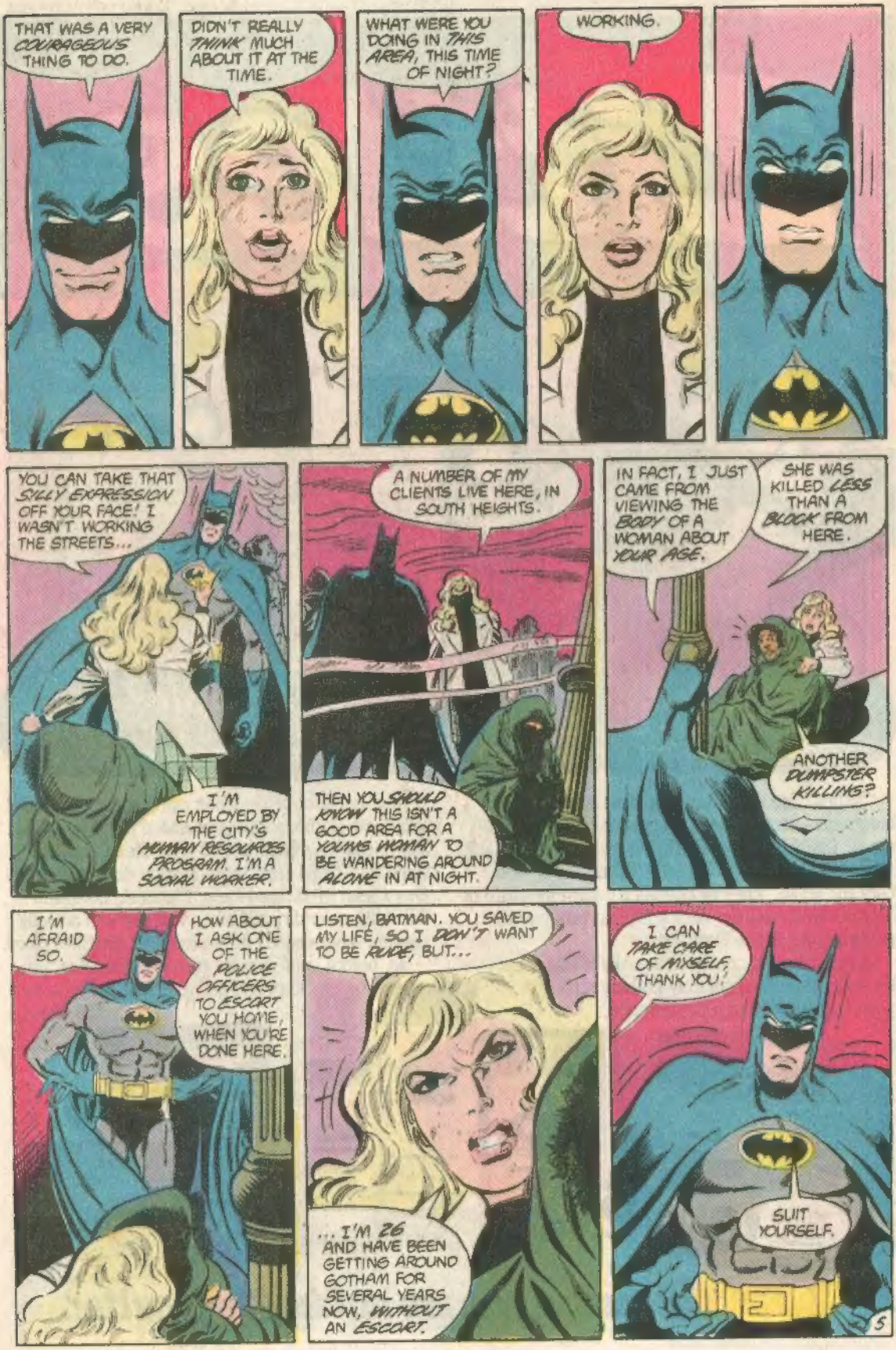
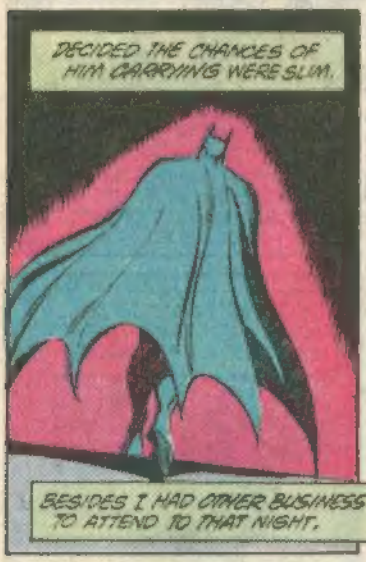

THAT WAS A VERY COURAGEOUS THING TO DO.
DIDN'T REALLY THINK MUCH ABOUT IT AT THE TIME.
WHAT WERE YOU DOING IN THIS AREA, THIS TIME OF NIGHT?
WORKING.
YOU CAN TAKE THAT SILLY EXPRESSION OFF YOUR FACE! I WASN'T WORKING THE STREETS...
I'M EMPLOYED BY THE CITY'S HUMAN RESOURCES PROGRAM. I'M A SOCIAL WORKER.
A NUMBER OF MY CLIENTS LIVE HERE, IN SOUTH HEIGHTS.
THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW THIS ISN'T A GOOD AREA FOR A YOUNG WOMAN TO BE WANDERING AROUND ALONE IN AT NIGHT.
IN FACT, I JUST CAME FROM VIEWING THE BODY OF A WOMAN ABOUT YOUR AGE.
SHE WAS KILLED LESS THAN A BLOCK FROM HERE.
ANOTHER DUMPSTER KILLING?
I'M AFRAID SO.
HOW ABOUT I ASK ONE OF THE POLICE OFFICERS TO ESCORT YOU HOME, WHEN YOU'RE DONE HERE.
LISTEN, BATMAN. YOU SAVED MY LIFE, SO I DON'T WANT TO BE RUDE, BUT...
... I'M 26 AND HAVE BEEN GETTING AROUND GOTHAM FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, WITHOUT AN ESCORT.
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, THANK YOU!
SUIT YOURSELF.

YES, I LIKED KATE'S SPUNK.
IF ONLY SHE'D HAD MORE COMMON SENSE, HAD LISTENED TO REASON...
SO MANY IFS...
AS I PASSED THE GROUP OF ONLOOKERS THAT GATHER AT ALL FIRES, I SPOTTED A FAMILIAR FACE.
FRANK CUTTER THOMPSON, DOPE PEDDLER AND TWO-TIME LOSER.
THOUGHT ABOUT ROUSTING HIM, BUT DIDN'T.

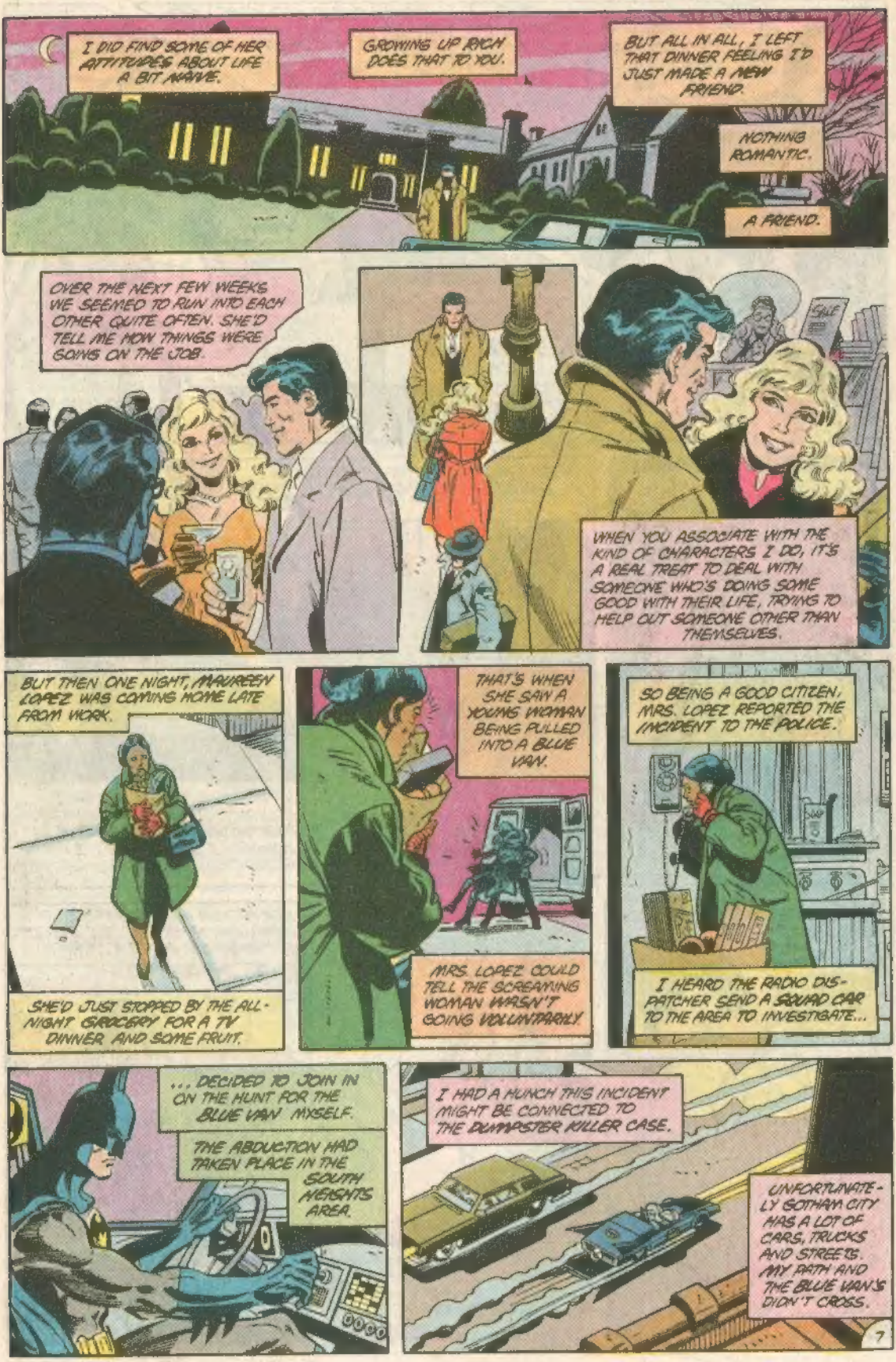

DECIDED THE CHANCES OF HIM CARRYING WERE SLIM.
BESIDES I HAD OTHER BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO THAT NIGHT.

WHEN I NEXT MET KATE, IT WAS AS BRUCE WAYNE AND A WEEK LATER.
IT WAS A BUSINESS DINNER I COULDN'T GET OUT OF. THE HOST, MORTON BABCOCK, OWNED A COMPANY I WAS HOPING THE WAYNE FOUNDATION COULD DO BUSINESS WITH.

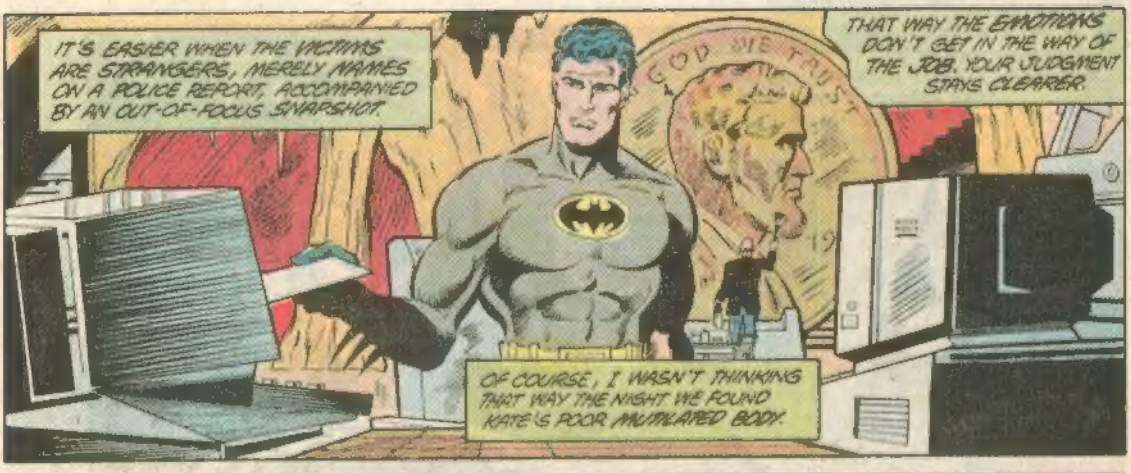
HI, I'M KATE BABCOCK.
BRUCE WAYNE.
I KNOW.

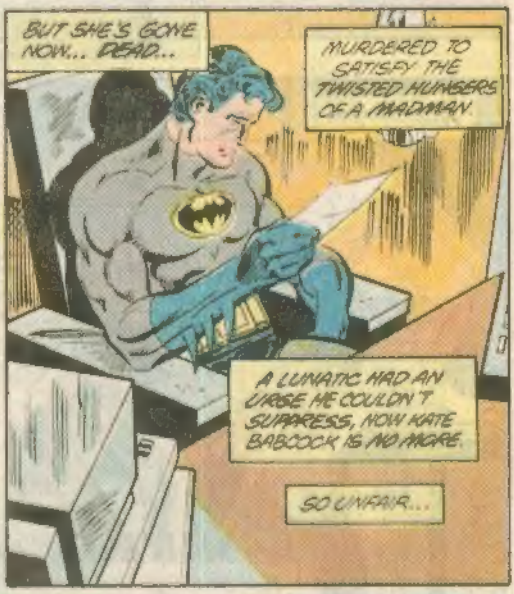
SHE WAS MORTON'S DAUGHTER. OF COURSE, SHE HAD NO IDEA WE'D MET BEFORE.
KATE TURNED OUT TO BE THE HIGH POINT OF MY EVENING. I FOUND TALKING TO HER A REAL PLEASURE.

HER FATHER DIDN'T APPROVE OF HER WORK. THOUGHT SHE SHOULD GET MARRIED, RAISE A FAMILY.
SHE FOUND TRYING TO HELP THE POOR MORE SATISFYING-- A CONCEPT I COULD EASILY UNDERSTAND.


I DID FIND SOME OF HER ATTITUDES ABOUT LIFE A BIT NAIVE.
GROWING UP RICH DOES THAT TO YOU.
BUT ALL IN ALL, I LEFT THAT DINNER FEELING I'D JUST MADE A NEW FRIEND.
NOTHING ROMANTIC.
A FRIEND.
OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WE SEEMED TO RUN INTO EACH OTHER QUITE OFTEN. SHE'D TELL ME HOW THINGS WERE GOING ON THE JOB.
WHEN YOU ASSOCIATE WITH THE KIND OF CHARACTERS I DO, IT'S A REAL TREAT TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE WHO'S DOING SOME GOOD WITH THEIR LIFE, TRYING TO HELP OUT SOMEONE OTHER THAN THEMSELVES.
BUT THEN ONE NIGHT, MAUREEN LOPEZ WAS COMING HOME LATE FROM WORK.
SHE'D JUST STOPPED BY THE ALL-NIGHT GROCERY FOR A TV DINNER AND SOME FRUIT.
THAT'S WHEN SHE SAW A YOUNG WOMAN BEING PULLED INTO A BLUE VAN.
MRS. LOPEZ COULD TELL THE SCREAMING WOMAN WASN'T GOING VOLUNTARILY.
SO BEING A GOOD CITIZEN, MRS. LOPEZ REPORTED THE INCIDENT TO THE POLICE.
I HEARD THE RADIO DISPATCHER SEND A SQUAD CAR TO THE AREA TO INVESTIGATE...
... DECIDED TO JOIN IN ON THE HUNT FOR THE BLUE VAN MYSELF.
THE ABDUCTION HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE SOUTH HEIGHTS AREA.
I HAD A HUNCH THIS INCIDENT MIGHT BE CONNECTED TO THE DUMPSTER KILLER CASE.
UNFORTUNATELY GOTHAM CITY HAS A LOT OF CARS, TRUCKS AND STREETS. MY PATH AND THE BLUE VAN'S DIDN'T CROSS.
7

4:45 A.M.
I GAVE UP THE HUNT AND WAS ABOUT TO CALL IT A NIGHT WHEN THE CALL CAME IN.
THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER DUMPSTER KILLING. 27TH STREET AND DECKER.
BE RIGHT THERE, COMMISSIONER.
VICTIM #4
THE MADMAN HAD STRUCK AGAIN.
BUT THIS TIME THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE HE'D BEEN SPOTTED.
THE BLUE VAN.
I WENT OVER TO EXAMINE THE BODY, WONDERING IF THERE'D BE ANYTHING DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS VICTIM...
...SOMETHING THAT MIGHT LEAD ME TO HER KILLER.
THERE WAS SOMETHING TERRIBLY DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS BODY...
KATE.
BATMAN, IS SOMETHING WRONG?
NO... NOTHING.


IT'S EASIER WHEN THE VICTIMS ARE STRANGERS, MERELY NAMES ON A POLICE REPORT, ACCOMPANIED BY AN OUT-OF-FOCUS SNAPSHOT.
THAT WAY THE EMOTIONS DON'T GET IN THE WAY OF THE JOB. YOUR JUDGMENT STAYS CLEARER.
OF COURSE, I WASN'T THINKING THAT WAY THE NIGHT WE FOUND KATE'S POOR MUTILATED BODY.


BUT SHE'S GONE NOW... DEAD...
MURDERED TO SATISFY THE TWISTED HUNGERS OF A MADMAN.
A LUNATIC HAD AN URGE HE COULDN'T SUPPRESS, NOW KATE BABCOCK IS NO MORE.
SO UNFAIR...

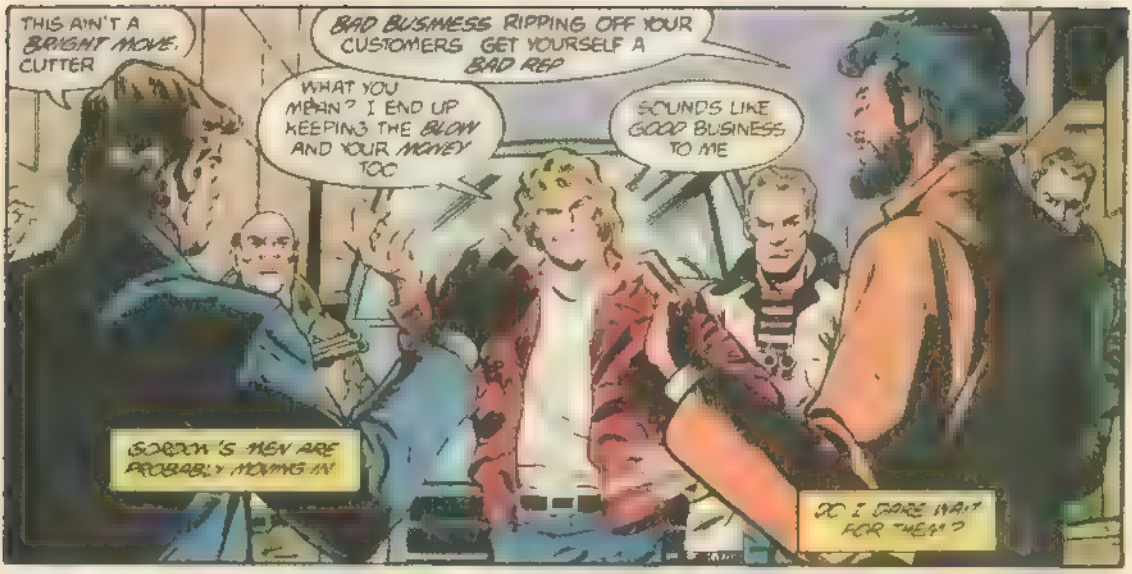
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

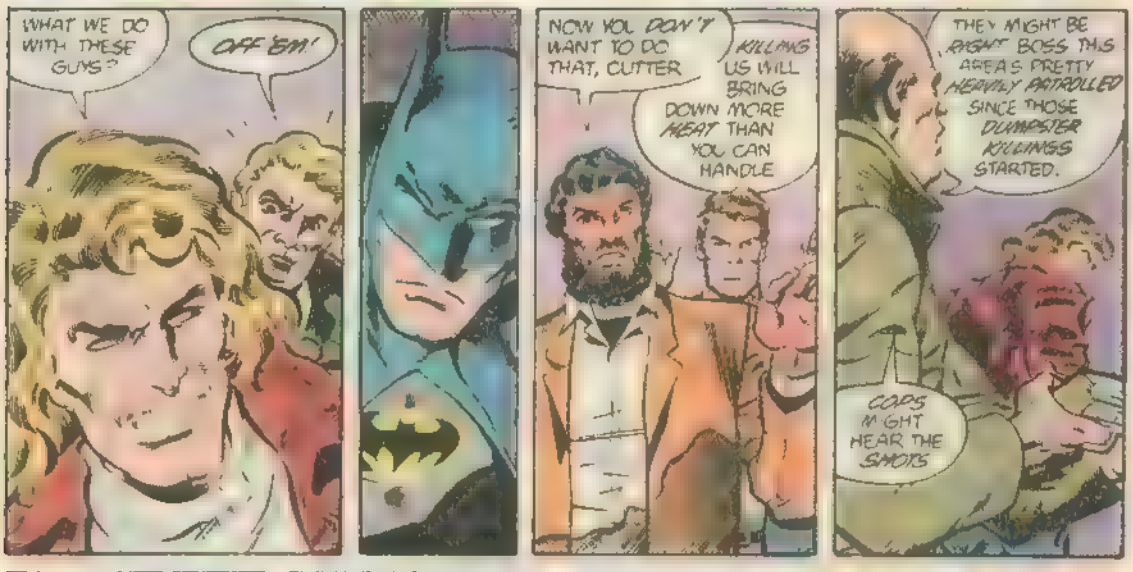
THOMPSON GOT HIS NICK-NAME BECAUSE OF HIS EXPERTISE AT DILUTING PURE COCAINE WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES, TO STRETCH OUT HIS SUPPLY
THEY CALL THIS PROCESS STEPPING ON OR CUTTING THE DOPE STILL.
HE WAS AT THE FIRE THE NIGHT VICTIM NUMBER 3 WAS KILLED
IT'S A LONG SHOT, BUT...
...WORTH A FEW HOURS OF INVESTIGATION.
I MADE MY WAY THROUGH CUTTER'S LIST OF KNOWN ASSOCIATES.
THEY WERE ALL WILLING TO TALK TO ME EVENTUALLY. UNFORTUNATELY NONE OF THEM HAD ANYTHING ALL THAT INTERESTING TO SAY.
CUTTER HAD NO HISTORY OF EXCESSIVELY VIOLENT BEHAVIOR--
NOR DID ANYONE EVER REMEMBER HIM USING A KNIFE. CUTTER LIKED GUNS. HE JUST DIDN'T FIT THE PROFILE
BUT I DECIDED NOT TO GIVE UP ON CUTTER JUST YET.
I HAD THIS FEELING.
IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO FIND WHERE CUTTER LIVED.
HE WASN'T HOME AND A SEARCH OF THE APARTMENT TURNED UP ZIP.

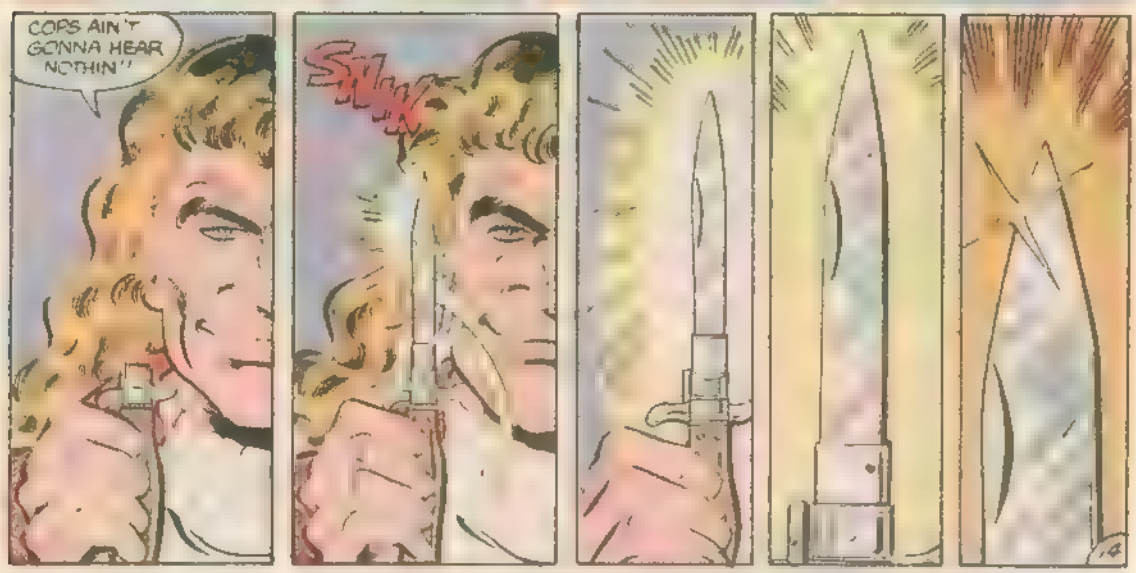
I WAS ABOUT TO GIVE UP ON CUTTER BUT I THOUGHT OF ONE LAST LEAD TO CHECK OUT
I TAPPED INTO THE DEPT OF MOTOR VEHICLES' COMPUTER RECORDS
THE DMV HAD A BLUE DODGE VAN REGISTERED TO ONE FRANK THOMPSON
AT LAST I HAD THE LEAD I WANTED
THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS I COULDN'T LOCATE CUTTER.
IT WAS AS IF HE'D DROPPED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH
DAYS TURNED INTO WEEKS, YET I FOUND NO TRACE OF MY PREY
I BEGAN TO THINK CUTTER MAY HAVE LEFT TOWN
I DIDN'T LIKE THAT IDEA
HE HAD TO STILL BE IN GOTHAM. STILL WITHIN MY REACH
THEN ONE DAY, I WAS VISITING COMMISSIONER GORDON
SEE YOU TOMORROW
THE BUY'S ALL SET FOR AT THE WAREHOUSE, TONIGHT
CUTTER SHOWS UP WITH THE NOSE CANDY AND WE BUST HIM. COULDN'T BE SIMPLER
WOULD YOU GENTLEMEN LIKE A LITTLE ADDITIONAL BACKUP THIS EVENING?

I SPENT THE EARLY EVENING CRUISING SOUTH HERE AS ALL OF THE DUMPSTER VICTIMS HAD COME FROM THIS AREA
I DIDN'T WANT CUTTER TO DISPOSE OF WOMAN NUMBER 5 BEFORE HE MET WITH THE UNDERCOVER COPS
THE RED VAN AND I HAD ALREADY PASSED EACH OTHER THREE TIMES TONIGHT
I KNOW I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE LOOK OUT FOR A BLUE VAN
WHEN I SPOTTED IT THE FOURTH TIME I DECIDED TO CHECK IT OUT
BUT THE STEP FROM BLUE TO RED ONLY TAKES A PAINT JOB
I WAS ABOUT TO PULL THE TRUCK OVER WHEN I HEARD THE GUN-SHOT
K-TOW
THE R TIMING COULDN'T HAVE BEEN WORSE
TWO LOSERS KNOCKING ON A LIQUOR STORE
THEY DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE SENSE TO LOOK WHERE THEY WERE GOING.

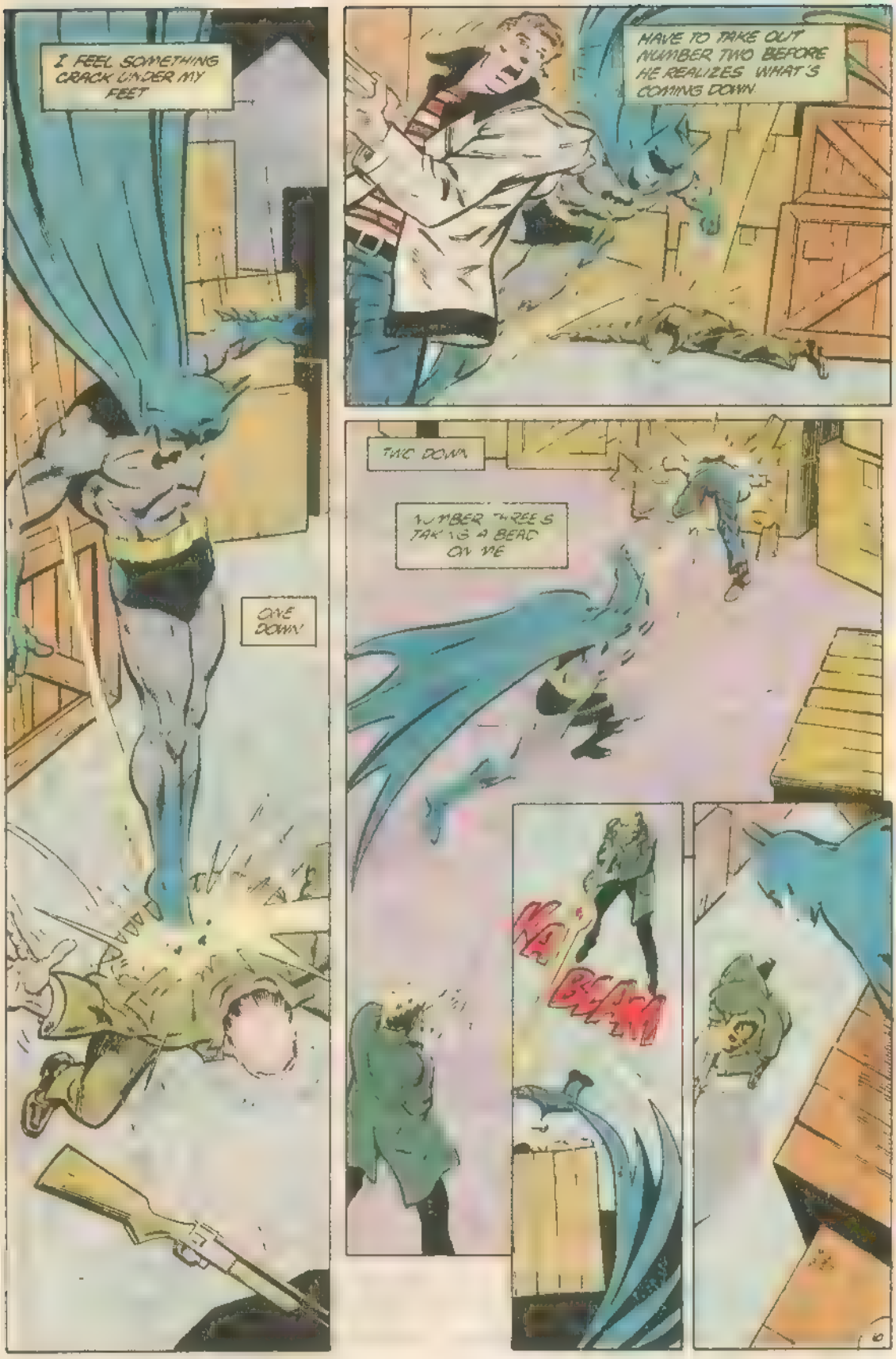
TAKING CARE OF THESE TWO JERKS DIDN'T TAKE LONG. DIDN'T EVEN WORK UP A SWEAT.
UNFORTUNATELY BY THE TIME THE PATROLCAR ARRIVED TO PICK THEM UP, IT WAS NEARLY MIDNIGHT.
THIS WAS ONE APPOINTMENT I DIDN'T WANT TO BE LATE FOR.
I CAME IN THROUGH A SECOND STORY WINDOW.
DIDN'T SEE ANY REASON TO ADVERTISE MY PRESENCE.
WAREHOUSE
IT WAS A GOOD THING I DIDN'T.
THE BUST HAD GONE SOUR.
3


THIS AIN'T A BRIGHT MOVE, CUTTER
BAD BUSINESS RIPPING OFF YOUR CUSTOMERS GET YOURSELF A BAD REP
WHAT YOU MEAN? I END UP KEEPING THE BLOW AND YOUR MONEY TOO
SOUNDS LIKE GOOD BUSINESS TO ME
GORDON'S MEN ARE PROBABLY MOVING IN
DO I DARE WAIT FOR THEM?


WHAT WE DO WITH THESE GUYS?
OFF 'EM!
NOW YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT, CUTTER
KILLING US WILL BRING DOWN MORE HEAT THAN YOU CAN HANDLE
THEY MIGHT BE RIGHT BOSS THIS AREA'S PRETTY HEAVILY PATROLLED SINCE THOSE DUMPSTER KILLINGS STARTED.
COPS MIGHT HEAR THE SHOTS


COPS AIN'T GONNA HEAR NOTHIN'!
SLAK
14

THE SIGHT OF THE KNIFE SNAPPED SOMETHING INSIDE ME
I MADE MY MOVE EVEN BEFORE I CONSCIOUSLY DECIDED TO DO SO
5


I FEEL SOMETHING CRACK UNDER MY FEET
ONE DOWN
HAVE TO TAKE OUT NUMBER TWO BEFORE HE REALIZES WHAT'S COMING DOWN
TAC DOWN
NUMBER THREE IS TAKING A BEAD ON ME
KA
BLAM

KRAK
DIDN'T PLAN ON THE BATMAN SHOWING UP!
THE GAS'S BLOWN, GOTTA SPLIT!
LET THOSE THREE MEAT-BALLS TAKE THE FALL FOR THIS ONE
THAT'S AS FAR AS YOU GO, CUTTER
YOU PLANNING TO SURRENDER PEACEFULLY
...OR ARE YOU GOING TO PUT UP A FIGHT?

STAY BACK!
I'LL CUT YA!
I WAS HOPING THAT WOULD BE YOUR DECISION
YA BUSTED MY ARM, MAN!
I'M GONNA SUE YER BUTT OFF!
THAT'S GOT TA BE A VIOLATION OF MY CIVIL RIGHTS!

GET UP
I THINK HE'S HAD ENOUGH
NOT AS MUCH AS HE DESERVES
JIM, GET YOUR FORENSIC TEAM ON THIS VAN IMMEDIATELY
WHY? WHAT SHOULD THEY LOOK FOR?
BUT I SUPPOSE IT WILL HAVE TO DO FOR NOW
19

I THINK THAT'S THE VAN USED IN THE KATE BABCOCK MURDER
YOU MEAN, CUTTER'S THE..
YES
CALLED IT A NIGHT AND RETURNED TO THE BATCAVE
..TOO WOUND UP TO DO ANY GOOD ON THE STREETS
NEARLY BLEW IT. I LET IT GET TOO PERSONAL
LOST MY DETACHMENT... NEARLY LOST CONTROL.
ALMOST BEAT CUTTER TO DEATH
WOULDN'T HAVE SEEN ANY PROFESSIONAL
STILL, I WOULD HAVE BEEN TOUGH TO LIVE WITH
RING RING
COMMISSIONER GORDON?
ARE THE FORENSIC RESULTS IN ALREADY?
NO
WE'RE NOT GOING TO RUN ANY TESTS ON THE VAN
FOR GOD'S SAKE, WHY?!
IT TURNS OUT CUTTER WAS IN JAIL WHEN KATE BABCOCK WAS MURDERED.
HE'D BEEN BUSTED FOR POSSESSION THREE WEEKS AGO. JUST GOT OUT ON BAIL YESTERDAY.
HIS VAN'S ALSO BEEN IN POLICE IMPOUND UNTIL YESTERDAY
GOTHAM POLICE
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE
20

"THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER DUMPSTER MURDER. THE CALL JUST CAME IN."
"MEET ME AT 30TH AND WALKER STREET."
LOOKS LIKE SHE'S BEEN DEAD ABOUT AN HOUR.
AN HOUR...
CUTTER'S BEEN IN POLICE CUSTODY FOR TWO HOURS.
I GOT A WITNESS, WHO SAYS SHE SAW A RED VAN PARKED IN THIS ALLEY, NO MORE THAN TWENTY MINUTES AGO.
RED VAN...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, BATMAN?
YES... I'LL BE OKAY.
IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO...
NO... NOTHING.
21
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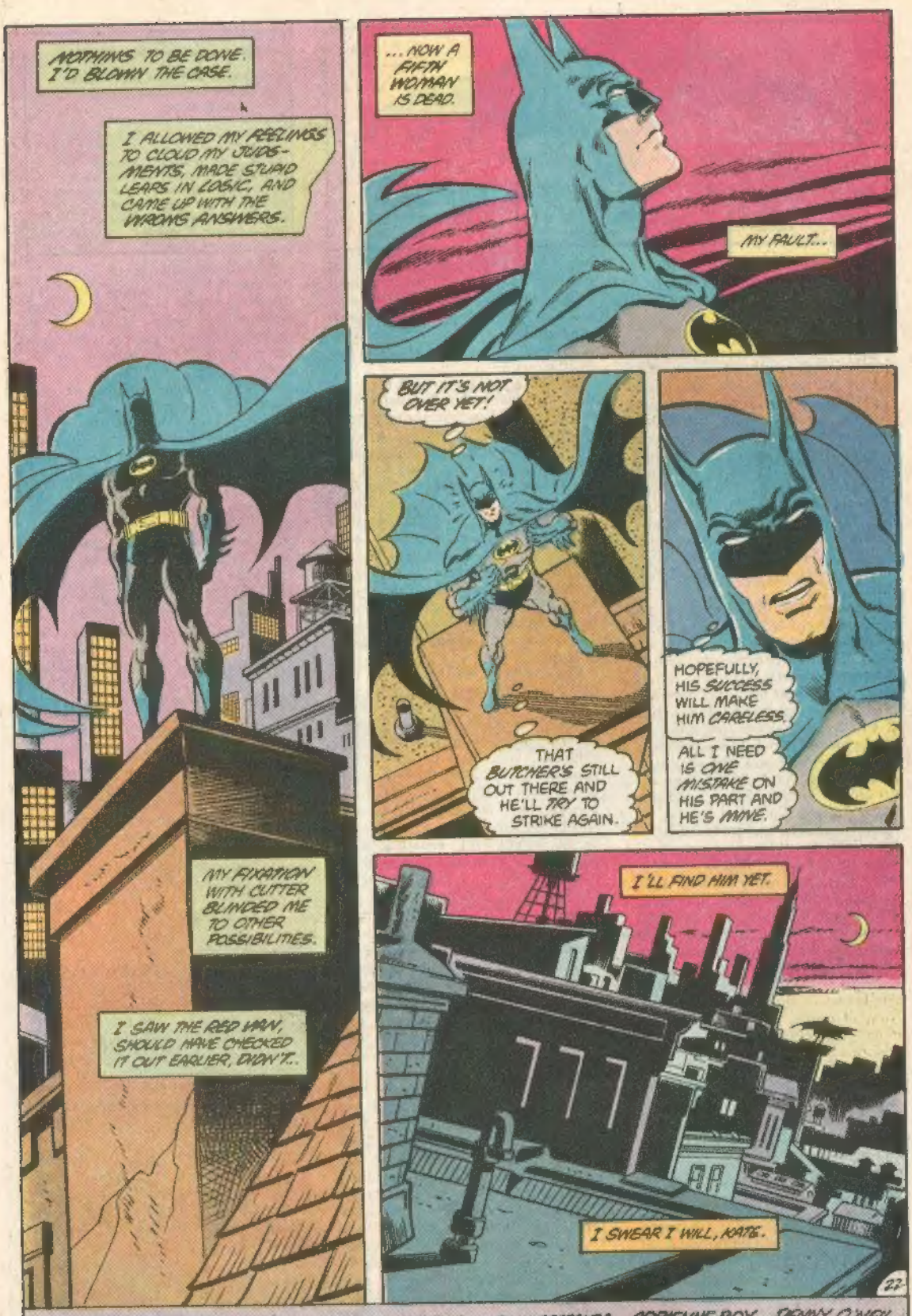
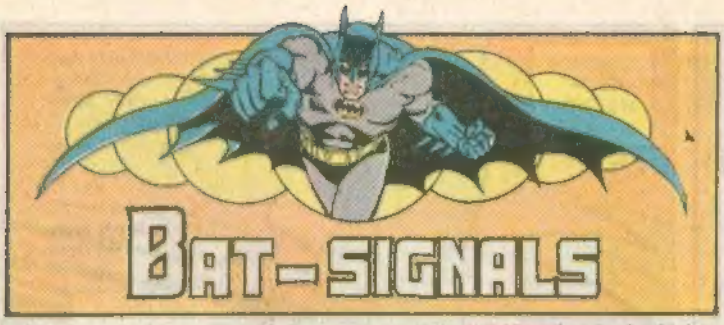

NOTHING TO BE DONE. I'D BLOWN THE CASE.
I ALLOWED MY FEELINGS TO CLOUD MY JUDGMENTS, MADE STUPID LEAPS IN LOGIC, AND CAME UP WITH THE WRONG ANSWERS.
MY FIXATION WITH CUTTER BLINDED ME TO OTHER POSSIBILITIES.
I SAW THE RED MAN, SHOULD HAVE CHECKED IT OUT EARLIER, DIDN'T..
...NOW A FIFTH WOMAN IS DEAD.
MY FAULT...
BUT IT'S NOT OVER YET!
THAT BUTCHER'S STILL OUT THERE AND HE'LL TRY TO STRIKE AGAIN.
HOPEFULLY, HIS SUCCESS WILL MAKE HIM CARELESS.
ALL I NEED IS ONE MISTAKE ON HIS PART AND HE'S MINE.
I'LL FIND HIM YET.
I SWEAR I WILL, KATE.
22

JIM STARLIN . JIM APARO . MIKE DeCARLO . JOHN COSTANZA . ADRIENNE ROY . DENNY O'NEIL
writer . penciller . inker . letterer . colorist . editor



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Dear Denny,

I was looking forward to seeing Dave Cockrum's artwork on BATMAN. I really wasn't sure what to expect, especially when I learned that Mike DeCarlo was to be the inker. Having read issue #410, and spending some time looking at the art, I can say that this new team might just be the right one. The finished art is more DeCarlo than Cockrum at first glance, but Dave's influence is there if one looks for it. It isn't what the dedicated Futurians fan might expect, but that is probably for the good. The more I study it, the more I like it. Robin is delightfully drawn as cute and impish as Alan Davis' version was. I just hope that the Mazzucchelli fans will give this worthy different style a fair chance to win them over.

Storywise, "Two of a Kind" did a lot to make me forgive DC for taking a highly satisfactory Doug Moench off BATMAN. Max Collins showed here a better grasp of the characters than in his previous stories, perhaps because he had the opportunity to work with Batman and Robin as a unit at last. I couldn't help comparing the development of the new, new Robin with Doug's version of events, and, while I had no complaints with latter, Max has come up with an equally pleasing approach. Perhaps there was a lack of detail in the opening sequence, I would have liked to have seen Jason's development from street punk to crime fighter in closer detail. He seems to have matured a little too quickly. Still, there is time for Max to delve deeper into this aspect in future issues. There were some really nice touches in the story, such as Alfred's admonition regarding Batman's emphasis on the first Robin and presenting Jason with Dick Grayson's costume. Now, of course, I am eager to see a meeting between Jason and Dick and I hope that it will be as emotional moment as it was the first time around.

Two-Face was handled very well. Max has made him a little more unpredictable than in former incarnations, or so it seemed from this episode. The connection with Jason's father lends a touch more immediacy to Dent and next issue should prove interesting.

All the best,
Dale Coe
56 Whitecross Road
Warrington
Cheshire, WA5 1LR
ENGLAND

* * * * *

Dear Bat-People,

About BATMAN #410 I'd just like to say, "Wow!" I'd leave it at that but it's just not in my nature to do so. #410 is without a doubt the best post-YEAR ONE story yet. The recent retelling of the Batman story involving both of his DC titles has been some of the best comic art and writing ever.

BATMAN #410 was so good, because it gave us a good look at Batman and his new Robin, without getting caught up in self-introspection. It showed development of Jason Todd from being a street kid into someone that could be a real contributor. It also provided an introduction to one of the classic Batman villains, Two-Face. He is a good Batman villain because of his maniacal obsessions. Other types of villains will work with Batman, but the dangerous insane type, with some sort of compulsion, is always the best bet to become a classic Batman challenger. So let's see more of Two-Face, as well as the Joker, Penguin, the Riddler, Mad Hatter et al.

The ending of #410 sets up the next adventure rather well. Robin's involvement should prove interesting. While growing up and reading BATMAN comics, Robin's involvement was usually enjoyable. Will there be an eventual return to a trend that seemed to be starting before YEAR ONE? That is, while Robin may appear in BATMAN, for the most part his adventures with Batman would be in DETECTIVE COMICS while Batman goes "solo" in his own title?

Stephen Cade
4831-49 Avenue, NW
Calgary, Alberta

There really isn't a set pattern to Robin's appearances, Stephen. For the time being, you can look for him to appear in either title as the story may warrant. This issue was a good example of that theory.

* * * * *

Sirs,

Now that Batman's identity has been firmly established (I hope), another issue must be addressed: his wheels.

Y'see, while Bruce Wayne's Lamborghini may fit his playboy image, it is altogether improper for Bats. First, his car should be open, so as to allow his cape to flow out. Second, the Lambo is just such a juvenile car! Let me suggest something a little more mature, something from the Dark Knight's, I mean Batman's heyday...the 1960's.

The car is a Ford Shelby Cobra, the one that beat Ferrari. A 1962 model could bridge the gap from 0-60 in 4.2 seconds, about a second faster than the charging bull. The car was originally available with Ford's reputable 289 c.i. But then by the mid-1960's, the competition (read: Corvettes) started to catch up. So Ford developed an engine so powerful, so infamous, so full of anger as to approach the reputation of the Batman: the 428 Cobra Jet.

Both the engine and the car were consigned to history by the gas and insurance crises of the early 1970's, about the same time the Batman's rep fell. Now a fully certified replica of the Snake is available, notably with Ford's modern killer engine, the Mustang 302.

Enough of the techie stuff. The car is mean. Mean enough to warrant the purchase of a brace by the frivolous Wayne. Think of the potential, Bruce. The wind blowing back your cape, an antisocial 428 under your right foot and anybody else's car behind you. You could even paint a bat on the hood.

Sincerely,
Ben Rothfeld
Millburn, NJ

P.S.: If you need someone to take care of it...

Thanks for the info, Ben. As you're reading this, I'm sure that fellow car enthusiast and cover sketch artist Ed Hannigan and I will be trying to find this car of yours! But, speaking as the proud new owner of a Honda Accord LXI Hatchback, I still wouldn't classify a "Lambo as a juvenile car". I mean, if you could have one- would you really turn it down? Nah...I didn't think so.

* * * * *

Dear Bat-People,

I have really enjoyed both of Batman's titles, but BATMAN #410 was beyond your usual creative genius. This is how Batman should be. The new origin of Robin/Jason Todd is definitely a move in the right direction. Although I can see why Batman needs a Robin, keep some element of realism when using him. He will obviously make some mistakes as he lacks Batman's (and the original Robin's) experience.

Concerning this issue, as expected Batman compares Dick to Jason. Jason's father was possibly killed by Two-Face? Jason wouldn't do anything stupid like trying to catch Two-Face on his own, would he?

Awaiting next issue,
Kevin Zawicki
5451 S. 25th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53221

P.S.: Drop the yellow background on the emblem!

Well, as we saw in issue #411, Jason

didn't strike out on his own but that still didn't stop him from having a natural, vengeful outburst...

* * * * *

Dear Editors,

In response to Leonard Kirk's comment on rabies shots in the letter column of BATMAN #410...well, I have had rabies shots, two years ago, and I certainly had trouble sitting down afterwards. You see, the business of getting shots in the stomach which Mr. Kirk refers to is no longer used. A less bothersome, shorter series of shots was put into service about four years ago. While one gets the smaller number of shots in the arm now, the person getting the shots must first be injected with a large quantity of preparation fluid (Gamma Globulin, I think) to prepare his or her system for the rabies vaccine. The Globulin is usually injected, as it was in my case, in the buttocks region. Four large needles of the stuff left me sleeping on my stomach that night, and I can back up the validity of Mr. Miller's rabies shot "joke."

Thanks for your time
Jonathan Stover
R.R. #2
Tillsonburg
Ontario, CANADA
N4G 4G7

Boy! First you guys get an automotive history lesson, and now we're all off to Med School. Who says reading the letter column isn't a mind expanding experience?!

Dear Denny,

Keep the awful, little, yellow owl. It doesn't stink.

Dave McDowell
1120 Collinsville Rd.
Suisun, CA 94585

There's nothing like real from-the-heart emotional support, eh gang?

Now, it's off to the Den...

—Jonathan

FROM THE DEN

Look out the window. Beautiful summer day. Temperature in the high 80s, low humidity, sunshine you could spread on toast. Below my office window, Fifth Avenue is thronged with some of the most beautiful people on Earth and Central Park is just three minutes' walk away.

And here am I, stuck inside, editing comic books.

A lot of you may think this is a snap of a job. Sitting around all day putting out funny books?—what could be bad? Well, listen, this past week has been a brute. We've all been here past six every night trying to get far enough ahead so we can go to some of the big summer conventions, and, worse, trying to coordinate all the forthcoming Millenium crossovers—a horrendously complex and demanding task. Did I say past six? Make it seven, eight, even nine. Weekends? They don't exist for the duration. We've got scripts to take home and read and those of us who contribute writing or drawing have *that* to do.

Did I mention annuals? Lot of those to get out in the next few weeks, too.

I talk to editors of other kinds of publications and they don't believe me when I say the average comic book editor meets between five and ten deadlines every month (except during the summer when it may be even more) and supervises at least five creative people *per story*.

During the winter it's demanding. During the summer—?

Summer and comics. I remember endless July afternoons sprawled on somebody's front porch with a few buddies surrounded by a couple of comic book collections. I didn't know, then, so many decades ago, how pleasant those afternoons were: good friends, no real problems, long, warm days that seemed to stretch into infinity and, not least, the flavoring of fun and fantasy the comics provided. Of course, we read comics during the winter, too—what do you think we were, Philistines?—but they were somehow *better* during the vacation months—a part of a whole that included sunshine, shade, the smell of new-mown grass, lemonade, *fun*.

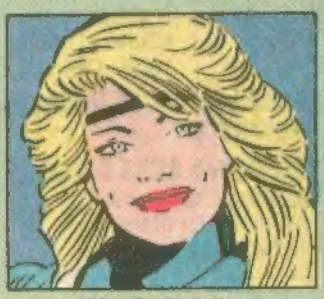
So I don't really mind being stuck in this office today. It seems to me that providing flavor to someone's pleasant summer afternoon is a nice thing to do. Worth a little sacrifice on my part.

Besides, I could be stuck inside doing something that's boring.

DENNY

ONE OF THESE PEOPLE HAS WAITED 1000 YEARS TO BETRAY US!

Captain Atom


Black Canary

Rocket Red #7

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